



V. OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

Building upon the Future Land Use Framework, more detailed plans, goals and policies have been developed for the area within direct influence of the Oak Forest Metra Station (generally a quarter-mile radius surrounding the station). The Sub-Area Plan addresses land use, redevelopment, urban design, and access and circulation issues in the Metra Station area and extending along adjacent corridors.

The Sub-Area Plan reflects the pending Gateway redevelopment in its proposed configuration as of December 2007, and also reflects the new commuter parking lot south of 159th Street. The Gateway project will include a slightly relocated Metra Station, but it is presumed that the platform configuration and access will remain unchanged. The Gateway project will likely serve as a catalyst for further improvements within the sub-area and extending along the adjacent commercial corridors, and will establish the level of quality expected for subsequent redevelopment projects in the City.

FRAMEWORK PLAN AND REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Figure 4: Sub-Area Redevelopment Framework depicts a general pattern of future land uses within the sub-area, and highlights key connections and open spaces that establish a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive environment.





V.OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

Figure 5: Station Area Redevelopment Concept and Illustrative describes in more detail a redevelopment scenario for the areas in closest proximity to the Oak Forest Metra Station. The Concept and Illustrative depict the scale and character of potential future buildings, roadways, parking lots and structures, open spaces, plazas and other proposed urban design features.

Figure 6: Cicero Avenue Redevelopment Concept and Illustrative describes a desirable commercial development pattern, scale and character based upon a potential increase in commercial lot depth on the west side of Cicero Avenue. The Concept and Illustrative depict the scale and character of potential future commercial buildings, parking lots, open spaces, plazas and other proposed urban design features.





LEGEND

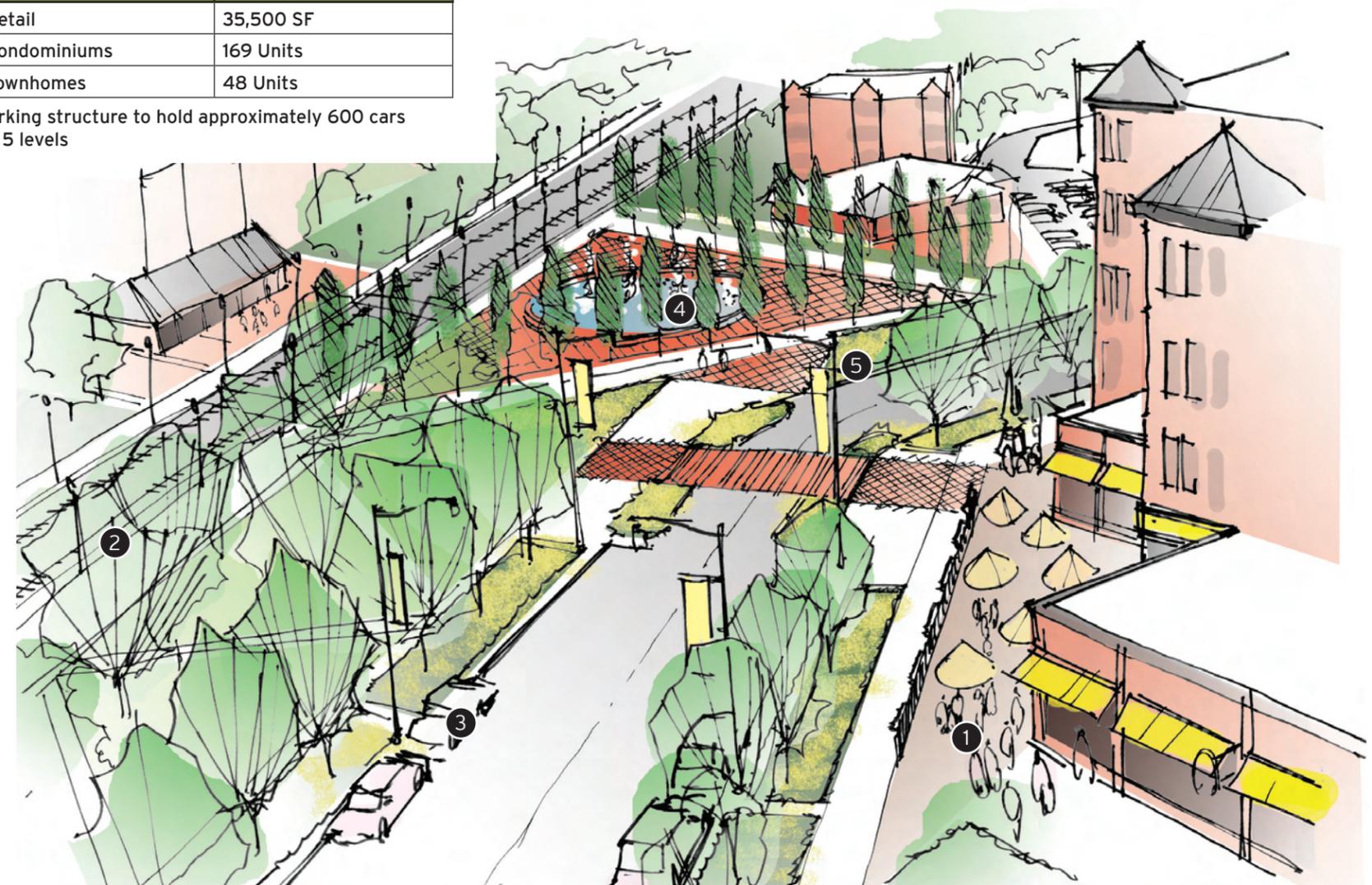
■	Retail	■	Multi-Family Townhouses
■	Mixed-Use - Retail/ Residential	■	Open Space
■	Municipal	■	Parking Garage
■	Multi-Family Condominiums		Illustration View

Land use	Quantities
Retail	35,500 SF
Condominiums	169 Units
Townhomes	48 Units

Parking structure to hold approximately 600 cars on 5 levels

FIGURE 5

STATION AREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT AND ILLUSTRATIVE



STATION AREA ILLUSTRATIVE (Looking Southwest)

Key Features:

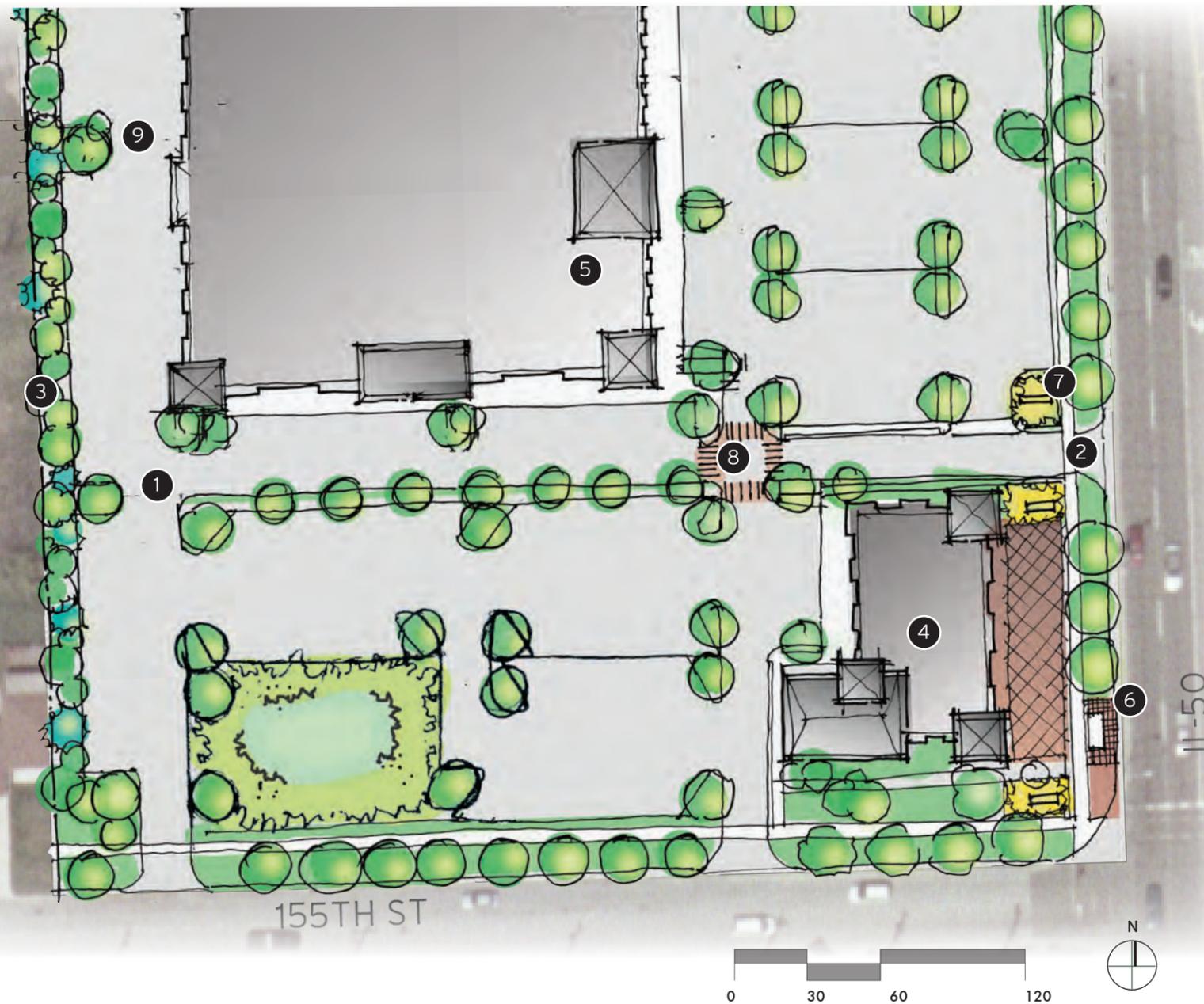
1. The pedestrian atmosphere along Station Parkway is created through the use of consistent streetscape and landscape elements.
2. Natural drainage features along the Metra Line are maintained as a visual amenity.
3. On-street parking buffers pedestrians from moving traffic.
4. Open spaces along Station Parkway provide visibility and access to the Metra Station, and allow for outdoor dining and display areas.
5. A "kiss-and-ride" area adjacent to Station Plaza allows for convenient commuter drop-off and potential future bus or shuttle service to the station.

Key Features:

1. Station Parkway provides a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere with accessible storefronts, convenient on-street shopper parking and adjacent open spaces, creating a "bypass" route to connect 159th and Cicero north of the Metra tracks.
2. A centralized Station Plaza provides access to the Metra Station and platforms from the north side of the tracks.
3. Storefront retail and restaurant spaces are located in areas with visibility and accessibility, utilizing adjacent open spaces for outdoor dining.
4. Increased residential density is concentrated along the Metra line in mid-rise mixed use and condominium buildings located within easy walking distance of the Metra Station.
5. Development density "steps down" from mid-rise mixed use buildings and condominiums to townhouses, to provide a physical buffer for the adjacent residential neighborhood.
6. Commuter parking is located in a parking structure that also serves nearby retailers through a shared parking arrangement. Commuter traffic between the garage and station is routed to support local retailers.
7. Surface parking in visible locations is also provided to support retail activity, while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly character.
8. Limited street closures and traffic calming measures will channel traffic along Station Parkway, while minimizing cut-through traffic in the adjacent neighborhood; pedestrian access is maintained at former street rights-of-way through the creation of small open spaces.

FIGURE 6

CICERO AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT
CONCEPT AND ILLUSTRATIVE



CICERO AVENUE ILLUSTRATIVE

Key Features:

1. Allow expansion of commercial lot depth to approximately 450' in designated areas, to accommodate larger scale commercial redevelopment.
2. Encourage full block redevelopment to provide for efficient shared parking areas and shared curb cuts, provided from side streets.
3. Maintain a significant physical buffer between commercial development and adjacent single family homes.
4. High quality free-standing buildings "hold the corner," articulated on all sides and oriented toward the street behind a shallow landscaped setback / outdoor dining area.
5. Mid-block structures are set back behind attractively landscaped parking lots, but with visible and highlighted entrances.
6. Incorporate Pace bus stop amenities into the streetscape- including concrete pads, benches and shelters.
7. Encourage high quality monument signage within planted areas, with shared signage for multi-tenant developments.
8. Cross-easements between developments allow for improved access for shoppers and minimal curb cuts on Cicero Avenue.
9. Loading dock and dumpster areas are concealed from view, with minimally intrusive lighting.
10. Utilize detention areas as a visual amenity with bioswale vegetation.



EXISTING CONDITIONS AERIAL
(NOT TO SCALE)



CICERO AVENUE EXISTING CONDITIONS
(LOOKING NORTH AT 155TH STREET)



GOALS AND POLICIES

The Sub-Area Goals and Policies below will direct City efforts to create a vibrant and sustainable focal point of activity for the community in the Oak Forest Metra Station area, in conjunction with the Sub-Area Redevelopment Framework and Concepts to follow.

SUB-AREA GOAL #1

Achieve a land use and development pattern that accommodates a vibrant mix of varied land uses that create a focus of pedestrian activity, mutually support one another and benefit from a transit-accessible location.

Policies:

1. Redevelop sites in a manner that has long-term sustainability and considers the land use pattern of the station area as a whole, focusing on opportunities to create transit-supportive and cohesive development to the north, west and south of the Metra Station.
2. Create a walkable, mixed use “shopping street” atmosphere along Station Parkway, a new roadway providing improved access to the north side of the Metra Station area.
3. Recognize that visibility for retail uses in the Metra Station area is very limited on sites without direct, at-grade access to Cicero Avenue or 159th Street; focus retail uses only on sites with adequate visibility and accessibility or in defined clusters along Station Parkway.
4. Recognize the potential for redevelopment of existing land uses and sites surrounding the Metra line by using the Gateway TOD redevelopment as a “catalyst” project for future development.
5. Pursue alternative temporary locations for Metra commuter parking while redevelopment occurs in the area, to avoid the displacement of commuter parking.
6. As redevelopment occurs in the area, pursue the development of a parking structure in a location that is both convenient to the Metra Station and supportive of potential and existing commercial uses through a shared parking agreement.
7. Develop townhouses and/or low-rise condominium units at the perimeter of the Station Parkway development area, to serve as a buffer against the existing residential neighborhood.
8. Consider opportunities to accommodate public or institutional uses in the Metra Station area, such as a satellite library facility, to serve as an activity hub to draw residents into the area.





V.OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

9. Redevelopment along Cicero Avenue and 159th Street will ideally encompass a full block front with a minimum of half of the block frontage. A master redevelopment plan that addresses shared parking and access strategies should be prepared for the entire redevelopment site.
10. At auto-oriented redevelopment sites along Cicero Avenue and 159th Street, high quality buildings should “hold the corners,” while mid-block buildings may be set back to accommodate convenient shared parking lots.
11. Where feasible, redevelopment sites along the west side of Cicero Avenue should be expanded to up to 450’ in depth, maintaining a minimum lot depth of 125’ at residential lots on Lamson Avenue.

SUB-AREA GOAL #2

Create a multi-modal pattern of access in the station area that accommodates automobiles while favoring pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, in a manner that minimizes the impact of transit-oriented development on adjacent neighborhoods.

Policies:

1. Develop Station Parkway as a two-lane roadway with on-street parking and pedestrian and bicycle friendly features.
2. Due to new development along Station Parkway, provide structured parking to accommodate both displaced existing spaces and up to 300 new commuter parking spaces north of the Metra Station, accessible from Station Parkway. Consider new parking demand projections from Metra as they are provided.
3. Provide and/or encourage shared parking lots, including accommodating evening and weekend commercial parking demand in the parking structure and in existing surface lots.
4. Create temporary parking lots as needed to serve commuter needs during redevelopment phases, to avoid inconveniencing commuters.
5. Pursue the installation of traffic signals at Cicero/157th to facilitate controlled and safe access from Cicero Avenue to Station Parkway for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Explore opportunities to coordinate this intersection with the intersection of Waverly/157th immediately to the north.
6. Access to Station Parkway from 159th Street will be provided from the existing signalized intersection at Laramie.





V. OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

7. Provide “kiss-and-ride” and bus stop locations at the Station Plaza north of the Metra Station to accommodate commuter drop-off/pick-up and potential future shuttle/van service to the station from the north. Improve Pace bus stop amenities and connections along 159th and Cicero adjacent to the Gateway TOD to accommodate Metra Station access from the south.
8. Maintain at-grade pedestrian crossings at the Metra Station platforms.
9. Integrate the new Metra Station and platforms into adjacent development patterns, both visually and functionally; open up views and access to the station from the north at Station Plaza.
10. Consider limited street closures to minimize cut-through traffic from Station Parkway into adjacent neighborhoods, while maintaining pedestrian access and safe access from both Cicero Avenue and 159th Street.
11. Employ traffic calming measures to control travel speeds on Station Parkway.
12. As redevelopment occurs along Cicero Avenue, strive to limit curb cuts to two per block face, with secondary access provided off of side streets. Cross-easements between individual parking lots are encouraged.

SUB-AREA GOAL #3

Create a visually appealing and comfortable environment for commuters, shoppers and residents through consistent and high quality streetscape treatments and open spaces.

Policies:

1. Establish Station Parkway and Station Plaza to provide pedestrian continuity throughout the Metra Station area, establish a linkage across the railroad tracks, and provide a venue for community events and outdoor dining.
2. Establish a consistent streetscape character along Station Parkway, with significant “gateway” elements at both Cicero Avenue and 159th Street to draw people in.
3. Utilize a system of wayfinding signage to create a unique identity for Station Parkway and guide visitors to the area.
4. Protect and enhance the natural drainage feature along the north side of the railroad tracks to create a unique visual amenity.
5. Utilize street closure locations to create small pocket parks that serve the local neighborhood.





V. OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

6. Require significant landscape enhancements at redevelopment in the Metra Station area, to include: perimeter and internal landscaping at parking lots, foundation landscaping at buildings, and landscaping in conjunction with free-standing signage. Utilize required detention areas as visual features and buffering devices.
7. Require high quality design and architectural details of buildings and signage within the Metra Station area, including encouragement of varied building massing and the use of monument signage where free-standing signs are necessary.
8. Conceal loading and service areas to minimize their impact on surrounding uses.
9. Require significant buffering at locations where commercial or mixed use buildings are directly adjacent to single family homes.
10. Establish a design treatment consistent with the Gateway TOD site for any future redevelopment occurring at the southwest corner of 159th and Cicero, to strengthen the "gateway" character of the intersection.
11. Capitalize on the attractive views east into the Midlothian Meadows Forest Preserve and the Oak Forest Hospital property as redevelopment occurs at the southwest corner of 159th and Cicero.

SUB-AREA GOAL #4

Align City codes and incentive programs with the development types and quality desired within the Metra Station area, to proactively impact the outcome of redevelopment efforts.

Policies:

1. Align zoning in the Metra Station area with the intent of the Plan, including facilitating the expansion of commercial lot depths along the west side of Cicero Avenue between 153rd and 158th Streets while maintaining residential uses on Lamon Avenue.
2. Establish design standards for redevelopment in the Metra Station area that ensure an attractive and high quality character is created.
3. Encourage a vibrant mix of businesses in the Metra Station area, including restaurants, entertainment uses, commuter-oriented services and specialty retailers along Station Parkway. Larger scale and auto-oriented uses should be encouraged to locate along Cicero Avenue or 159th Street.





V.OAK FOREST METRA STATION SUB-AREA

4. Consider strategic City land acquisition through voluntary sales to assemble parcels of suitable size for redevelopment in the Metra Station area.
5. Maximize the use of external resources to leverage City funds in encouraging redevelopment in the Metra Station area.
6. Consider varied incentive programs and tools to facilitate redevelopment in the Metra Station area, to include tax increment finance (TIF) district (or expansion of an existing district), a business improvement district (BID), and/or loan or grant programs to encourage and facilitate private sector redevelopment efforts.

